Mr. Joseph Pettah.—It is the practice in other sister States like Travancore.

Mr. Thomas Manjuran.— There are several things done in sister States which we do not do here. If the Hon'ble Member wants to modify the law he can bring in amending legislation in this Council. But this is the law, as it exists to-day.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.— I don't press the motion.

Motion was, with leave, withdrawn.

Demand minus Re. 1 was then put and carried.

2. 1. Land Revenue—Cranganur—Rs. 14,273.

Mr. U. Kandar Menon.—I rise to move for a grant of Rs 14,273 under 1—Land Revenue—Cranganur. No remarks are called for from me. I request the House will be pleased to grant it.

Demand put and carried.

3. 22—Medical—Rs. 3,56,218.

Dr D. Raghavendra Rao.—Sir, I rise to move for a demand of Rs. 3,56,218 under 22—Medical.

This is the first budget that I am going to move after the bifurcation of the Department into Medical and Sanitary and the creation of a separate heading, Ayurveda under head No. 23. It will be noticed that Government have been kind enough to allot a sum of Rs. 4,56,600, the total under Medical and also another sum of Rs. 38,400 under P. W. D. for improvement of the existing and the construction of additional buildings at the various institutions. Thus, in all a sum of Rs. 4,94,000 is earmarked under this head over and above the amounts allotted under Ayurveda and Rs. 1,20,000 under Public Health. Out of a budgetted estimate under receipts of the whole State of nearly 85 lakhs for the year 1109 a sum of a little over 5 lakhs is thus set apart for medical relief. It is true that Education and Public Works carry a big slice away from Public Revenues and of the spending departments mine comes the next.

After hearing the criticisms levelled against the Government during the last few days I became sceptic and began to introspect whether after all, all of us Members on the Government bench deserved all the encomiums at the hands of our friends from the non-official side and whether everyone of us here representing the Government was as hard-hearted and blind to the interests of the tax-payer as was depicted to be * *

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Sir, we protest against that statement.

Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao.—I withdraw, Sir. I apologise, if it is objectionable.

Dr. A. R. Menon.—The only thing is that when we give something in return you should not object.

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President.—What he said was that somebody said so in the Council.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Do you permit us to come and place before the Council all that we hear outside?

Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao—Turning to facts which must speak for themselves, I may state that the medical expenditure in this State which stood at a figure of about Rs. 70,000, when I joined the Department 26 years ago, is to-day more than 5 lakhs. There were no Civil Surgeons then and there are four to-day. The number of Assistant Surgeons which stood at two is to-day 13. The number of Sub-Assistant Surgeons which stood at 11 is to-day 42 in the State service over and above the 15 men in charge of grant-in-aid dispensaries and 15 medical officers doing honorary work. The number of Nurses which was nil then stands at a figure of 72 to-day. The number of midwives which stood at 10 in those days is 46 to-day. The number of compounders which was 14 then is 49 to-day. There were only 10 hospitals and 5 dispensaries in the whole State. To-day there are 13 hospitals, 17 dispensaries, 7 Itinerating dispensaries and 15 State-aided dispensaries over and above the Leper Asylum.

The expenditure under medicines which stood at Rs. 19,000 stands at a figure of Rs. 1,19,000 for the next year. The amount allotted under bedding and clothing which was Rs. 1,200 then, stands at a figure of Rs. 11,000 for the next year. The allotment under dietary which stood at Rs. 5,500 stands to-day at Rs. 40,000.

This record proved by facts and figures is ample proof of the steady progress which the department has been keeping up under the kind patronage of the Government and I may, without the slightest fear of contradiction, state that Cochin stands easily the first as regards medical relief when compared with any other State or even British India When I have stated this it should not be misconstrued that we have reached a state of perfection and that nothing further need be done. No one is more dissatisfied than myself with the rate of progress and I do wish that all these institutions could be improved in the shortest span of this, if possible in a year. But there are practical difficulties in achieving this. Bricks can't be burned without straw, and no improvements can be made without funds. All that I can vouchsafe is that every personal endeavour is bestowed to economise expenditure to prevent waste, to take advantage of the cheapest market and to furnish every institution irrespective of the locality or importance with all possible conveniences with the limited funds made available to this department.

The number of appliances both surgical and medical, the several articles of furniture and the liberal supply of drugs made to every individual institution during the last couple of years,

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will be testified by the medical officers in charge of the several institutions and the public at large.

As my friend the Member for Education expressed on the floor of this House in his reply to the general discussion on the budget stating that the cry was schools, more schools and yet more schools, so it has been dispensaries, hospitals and yet more dispensaries and hospitals. It does not stop here in the case of this department. At first a grant-in-aid dispensary, then a regular dispensary, and the next the dispensary has to be converted into a hospital. We have to stop multiplying hospitals. In this State where means of communications are so convenient and the distances so short what ought to be done is to improve the existing hospitals greatly, instead of converting the existing dispensaries into hospitals. This would be a wiser plan as the quality of the work turned out will improve which otherwise will deteriorate as the resources of the department will be flittered away in the multiplication of institutions which are bound to be ill-equipped and under-manned with the supplies limited and conveniences minimised. I am sure no Member in this hall would like to see this state of affairs. No doubt, the opposite argument of half a loaf being better than no loaf may be trotted out. But I wish to state with all the emphasis that I can command, that in the case of medical institutions the standard of quality and usefulness ought to stand before numbers.

Coming to the Budget itself I am happy to observe that the Government has been extremely kind to allot most of the items that I had provided for in the budget. No I doubt, would have liked a better allotment in the Public Works Department for increased accommodation and a few other buildings for the department. But as the resources of the Government are limited and as they have to meet several demands from various departments, it is but natural that they are not in a position to provide funds for all the requirements that we press for. Hence with reluctance we have to be satisfied with the allotment of Rs. 38,000 to this department under Public Works and be grateful to the Government.

During the general discussion on the budget the Member for Jews pressed upon the Government the need for alloting some amount for the construction of the hospital at Mattancheri and he expressed an anxiety whether Government intended not to provide a hospital for that place. I may assure the Member that it is not the idea of Government to stop with the construction of the dispensary alone and that the work of the construction of the necessary buildings for the hospital will be taken up soon and I am authorised by the Diwan to state in this Council

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that some provision of at least 6 or 7 thousand will be made for the construction of the hospital during the next year itself. I assure the Members of the non-official side that this department has been vigilent and has not shown any inactivity and every need of the public has been brought forward to the notice of the Government. Not being satisfied with the conditions available in the Civil Hospital, Trichur, the Maternity Hospital, Trichur, the Mental Hospital, Trichur and the Women and Children Hospital, Mattancheri, I requested the permanent Diwan to pay personal visits to these institutions. I accompanied him during these visits and pointed out the necessary improvements, to be made the difficulties experienced and the urgency of these needs. A couple of weeks ago I even took the officiating Diwan to see the state of affairs of the Mental Hospital, Trichur. A comprehensive scheme for the improvement of all the institutions in the State has been prepared and submitted to the Government but unfortunately due to the paucity of funds the programme cannot be carried on in the rigorous way in which I myself would wish it. During the year requisitions of starting Itinerating Dispensaries in several places came up before the notice of the Government, chiefly from the people of Varantharappilli, Peringottukara and Elanad. The one for the last mentioned place has been sanctioned and budgetted for, but the case of the other two is pending consideration of the Government.

Leper Asylum—I may state a few words about the working of the Leper Asylum. This institution which was started about 25 years ago at Venduruthi in the old salt godowns there without about three inmates to start with, was under my direct charge and supervision. It has steadily grown and it was found impossible to accommodate the increasing number of inmates there, both due to want of facilities for expansion and unsuitability of the place in other respects also.

The number of inmates steadily increased and was about one hundred and twenty-six when the Asylum was shifted to Adoor in its present place. The expenditure for the maintenance of the Asylum while at Venduruthi was about Rs. 13,000, but now it stands at a colossal figure of nearly Rs. 50,000. This year the number of inmates exceeded three hundred with the result that expenditure could not be kept within budget allotments and we had to discharge and keep the number down to 240 as per orders of Government.

Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—Are the lepers increasing in the State?

Dr. D. Raghavendra Rao.—Yes.

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Fortunately agreater provision has been made for the next year so that more patients may be admitted in the Asylum.

The Sankariah Home for untainted children will also be opened during the next year and provision has been made to admit 20 children of leper parents. Arrangements will be made for giving them some sort of education, both literary and vocational. I am happy to say that the Salvation Army has been bestowing all sympathy and interest in the running of this institution. They try to make the inmates as happy as possible and the effects of treatment by modern methods has been very successful in patients who resort for treatment in early stages.

I am glad to announce that the Salvation Army quarters with Dr. Noble as the Medical Superintendent has been bestowing personal attention in all matters connected with the welfare of the inmates. If there is anyone who has any doubt about the administration of this institution I would invite him to be kind enough to pay a visit to the institution and satisfy for himself about the nature of the work turned out there.

On my personal representation to Dr. Noble, he has been kind enough to reduce the contract dietary rate from Rs. 12 per head per mensem to Rs. 10 per month from the next year. In spite of the fact that the Salvation Army could easily have stuck to the terms of the contract between them and the Government, I am happy to say that Dr. Noble has kindly consented to wave their rights and meet my wishes in view of the present financial depression and low prices of commodities and has rendered it possible for us to admit a larger number into the Asylum without incurring extra expenditure. This one fact itself will prove how solicitous the Salvation Army people are in the noble work that they have undertaken.

It may not be possible to admit all the lepers in the State as this would mean an expenditure of 3 to 4 lakhs a year but I may state for the information of this House that leper clinics at eight different centres have been started at which treatment on modern lines is being administered by the different medical officers in charge of the respective institutions with very little extra cost to the Government.

I wish to express my grateful thanks to those medical officers who are carrying this work gratuitously even at some risk and inconvenience to themselves.

I do not wish to protract the speech any more as there are a few cut-motions tabled at which time I shall amplify my remarks about them. I request the House to sanction the allotment.

The House rose for the day at 5 p. m.

C. J. MATHEW,
Secretaryto the Council.

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